For Immediate Release:

Fear No Music Expands with Two New Members

and Brings “Justice (Just Us)”

with 2019/20 Season

“More than ever, Portland composers and audiences really do fear no music.”

- The Oregonian, January 2019

August 6, 2019 (Portland, OR): It is with tremendous excitement that in conjunction with their 2019-20 season, Fear No Music announces the addition of two new permanent members to their all-star roster: the “jewel-voiced” (Oregon ArtsWatch) soprano Arwen Myers, and Oregon Symphony principal clarinetist, James Shields.
Praised for her “crystalline tone and delicate passagework” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), soprano Arwen Myers is a captivating and sensitive interpreter of repertoire spanning from early to new music. A versatile artist particularly known for her flexibility and mastery of a wide range of vocal colors and styles, she has performed major works with Portland Baroque Orchestra, Early Music Vancouver, Pacific MusicWorks, and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, among others. Recent and upcoming highlights include Handel with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra; Bach and Purcell with Portland Baroque Orchestra; Vivaldi, Monteverdi, and Gabrieli with Early Music Vancouver; Fauré with Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra; world premieres by Robert Kyr, Zachary Wadsworth, J.J. Wright, and Michel Petrossian; and Handel *Semele* (title role) with American Bach Soloists Academy. An enthusiastic collaborator and active freelance artist across the United States and beyond, she has performed with Seraphic Fire, Bach Akademie Charlotte, and Cappella Romana. Myers is co-artistic director of Northwest Art Song. She writes:

“I'm thrilled to join an ensemble that is not only focused on musical excellence (which it clearly is!) but has such an eye for connecting music to the world we live in. Fear No Music highlights some of the major issues we face in the 21st century - racism, poverty, gender inequality, environmental injustice, and so much more - and creating a space to thoughtfully consider these issues and face them head on is the only way we can begin to build a better world.”

A dynamic and passionate performer of chamber music, James Shields is co-artistic director of Chatter, an Albuquerque-based chamber music organization that presents over 60 concerts annually. He is a core member of 45th Parallel Universe and is also a composer. Before joining the Oregon Symphony, Shields served as principal clarinet of the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto as well as the New Mexico Philharmonic in Albuquerque; has appeared as a soloist with the Oregon Symphony, New Mexico Philharmonic, Interlochen’s World Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Albuquerque Philharmonic Orchestra; and as guest principal clarinet with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, and Santa Fe Pro Musica. Shields says:

“I'm thrilled to join Fear No Music, not only because I find performing new compositions exhilarating, but also because the organization has a truly unique commitment to using contemporary musical performance as a launch-pad to explore larger questions and social issues. Through my involvement with Fear No Music, I’m hoping to not only challenge audiences with new sounds, but to be challenged myself by being a part of a bolder and more holistic way of approaching the cutting edge of musical composition.”

Fear No Music’s 2019-20 season “Justice (Just Us)” connects Portlanders to the international movement of restorative justice and forgiveness-based healing, through the medium of music. The shared experience of Fear No Music’s live performances encourage conversations about and inspired action around the commonalities of our human experience that transcend our differences. The season provides an amplified voice to the stories of oppressed peoples, environmental issues, and important musical works that survived initially dismissive reviews. Through these justice driven programs, Fear No Music expands audiences’ awareness of and capability to process emotions associated with the stark realities of the world we live in, thus offering an avenue for healing and positive change.
Following seasons which celebrated diversity and inclusivity through music, and explored music as an effective tool for activism, Fear No Music has streamlined its programmatic focus, establishing itself as a clear public advocate for global peace and equity.

*Fear No Music’s husband-and-wife leadership team—Artistic Director Kenji Bunch and Executive Director Monica Ohuchi—have spent the past five years making FNM the best kind of Portland hybrid: a classical ensemble with unimpeachable performance credentials, a love for local and contemporary composers, and a mature sense of social justice and responsibility.*

- Oregon ArtsWatch, May 1, 2019

“Justice (Just Us)” concerts take place at The Old Church Concert Hall in downtown Portland:

**Monday, September 23, 2019 (7:30pm)**

**HEARINGS: New Music Inspired by the 2018 “Kavanaugh Hearings”**

This program features eight World Premiere performances of new music which draws on the watershed moment of the 2018 Kavanaugh Senate Confirmation Hearings as inspiration. Works utilize text from the hearing transcripts, elements of audio material from that proceeding, and other creative means. Composers include Andrea Reinkemeyer, Daniel Felsenfeld, Ruby Fulton, Carolyn Quick, Stacy Fahrion, Megan DiGeorgio, Matthew Packwood, and Jack Gabel.

**Monday, November 11, 2019 (7:30pm)**

**The F Word: A Memorial to Mulugeta Seraw**

Fear No Music reflects on the first thirty years since the brutal murder of Ethiopian student Mulugeta Seraw on the streets of Southeast Portland with a multimedia performance curated by composer (and Portland native) Ryan Francis. A World Premiere by Francis titled *Night Walk* (for flute, clarinet, 2 violins, viola, cello, piano and percussion) makes up one half of the program. The complement is David Bruce’s modern epic *Gumboots* for clarinet and string quartet. Commissioned by Carnegie Hall and performed and recorded to general acclaim many times during its 15 year history, this evocative and instantly appealing piece is “a moving work of great beauty and vitality that conveys a sense of journey.” *(The International Clarinet Association)* This concert is in conjunction with a display of The F Word exhibit, a touring exhibit from The Forgiveness Project, a UK-based organization that uses storytelling to promote personal and community healing and restorative justice.

**Monday, January 20, 2020 (7:30pm)**

**Locally Sourced Sounds VI**

“Fear No Music’s annual Locally Sourced Sounds concert, one of Oregon’s most valuable music series” *(Oregon ArtsWatch)* experiences its sixth iteration showcasing music by composers living and working in the region of Oregon and southwest Washington. Composers include Nicholas Emerson, Yuan-Chen Li, Li Tao, Janice Giteck, Jake Safirstein, and Garrett Key.

**Monday, March 23, 2020 (7:30pm)**

**Just Us**

An evening of meditations on our connection to our environment, to each other, and to our inner selves. Our shifting climate and landscapes have profound effects on both the natural world and our way of life. Fear No Music explores the ramifications through pieces by Carmen Braden, Dorothy Chang, Katherine Balch, David T. Little and Erin Gee. Gee’s *Mouthpiece 28* stands out on this program for its “hushed
nonverbal sounds supported by subtle instrumental effects (which) project an intimate sound world… the result is original, powerful, and haunting.” (American Academy of Arts and Letters, Charles Ives Fellowship Recipient, 2015)

Monday, May 18, 2020 (7:30pm)

**Haters Gonna Hate**

This is a celebration of works that survived initially dismissive reviews and vitriolic objections to emerge as landmarks of innovation in the trajectory of the concert music tradition. Alex Temple describes her *Viola Joke* as “a comedy routine for an apocalyptic nightmare universe.” Morton Feldman’s *King of Denmark* for percussion solo is a quiet study in instrumental color, notated graphically and executed with only hands, fingers and arms as no sticks or mallets may be used. Now considered a true masterpiece for solo flute, Edgar Varèse’s *Density 21.5* showcases both the composer’s unique creative genius and the expressive and technical possibilities of the instrument. Maurice Ravel’s jazz and blues inspired *Sonata* for violin and piano, and Beethoven’s profound final *Piano Sonata* complete the program.

Sunday, June 14, 2020 (12pm)

**Folk you, too!**

The annual reprise of 2018’s bonus concert, this program is a vibrantly diverse and creative showcase of music from countries around the world that have been maligned and misunderstood in our national conversation. Featured composers are Arturo Corrales of El Salvador, Joshua Uzoigwe of Nigeria, and Haitian-American Nathalie Joachim. The concert coincides with President Donald Trump’s birthday, and as a special tribute, concludes with Daniel Felsenfeld’s *Presidential Address*, a sober, unflinching setting of the President’s own words from the infamous *Access:Hollywood* tapes… This never gets old.

Learn more about Fear No Music’s “Justice (Just Us)” season and purchase season or individual concert tickets, available starting in mid August, at fearnomusic.org. Check the website throughout the season for information about additional regional performances.

Also of major note for the 2019-20 season is an expansion of the tremendously successful commissioning program for young composers, The Authentic Voice. Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project (YCP) “which provides unparalleled training and performance opportunities for promising composers” (*Lake Oswego Review*) joined forces with the Metropolitan Youth Symphony (MYS) in launching the program last year to “teach young musicians to use their artistry to empower others and create joy in the world.” (Raúl Gómez, Music Director, MYS) The Authentic Voice offers young composers an opportunity to write for and hear their work publicly performed by full symphony orchestra, while giving ensemble musicians a chance to play never performed music by their peers. The program expands in this second season, to include:

- Three symphonic commissions of new works by local, student composers, developed through Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project
- World Premieres of each of these works performed by the MYS Symphony Orchestra at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall (November 10, 2019; March 8, 2020; May 24, 2020)
- Eight YCP student arrangements of Nathan Avakian’s pipe organ film scores for full orchestra, with two scores arranged by students from Costa Rica performed to film by MYS at the...
Newmark Theatre on January 12, 2020, in partnership with the International Youth Silent Film Festival

- Further opportunities for readings and performances of works by younger composers with other MYS ensembles, including the Concert Orchestra, Vivaldi Strings, Symphonic Band, and MYSticks Percussion Ensemble

“By way of the unprecedented opportunity that this program provides, **Portland is becoming a leader in the development of the next generation of composers.**” (Jeff Payne, founder of the Young Composers Project) The Authentic Voice program is made possible through the generous support of Ronni Lacroute.

[Images of Rohan Srinivasan, Matthew Kaminski, and Grace Miedziak]

**Fear No Music** promotes music education through the high quality public performance of modern and contemporary classical music, and by offering groundbreaking youth mentorship in composition. This flexible chamber music ensemble comprised of some of Oregon’s most talented performers promotes living composers and exposes audiences to new music being made both locally and globally through a uniquely relevant annual concert series. The group educates and trains the next generation of young composers in our community by way of the Young Composers Project. Fear No Music is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Learn more at fearomusic.org.

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